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Indian Christians and Cooperation with Non-Christians

P. CHENCHIAH

(Part of a paper prepared for a Christian Conference on Sarvodaya held at Nagpur in October 1957)

I

What strikes one as an eminently reasonable proposition, that a Christian should work with non-Christians in all fields of activity that do not involve a challenge to his loyalty to Christ or a temptation to stray away from the ethics of Jesus, has always met with some opposition in the history of Christianity. Though in the West the non-cooperation doctrine survives as a rudimentary organ in an effete theology, in the East, owing to the historic circumstances of the origin of the Christian community, it has assumed sizeable dimensions and has formed the bulwark of separatism.

It may not appear to be necessary to canvass extensively the theology, temper and mood which lurk behind the aversion to cooperation with Hindus and Muslims in national efforts. Since the resistance to cooperation is not rational but subconscious and creates submerged antipathies, prejudices and inhibitions symptomatic of psychic obsessions and repressions, we have to subject it to psycho-analytical treatment. This necessitates dragging the fears, premonitions and vague dreads into the light of consciousness and showing that they have very little substance and value in them. We shall therefore first trace the history of the doctrine of 'withdrawal from the world' in Christianity and of 'cooperation or flowing into and directing the forces of life and history towards a pre-ordained end'.

COME YE OUT FROM AMONG THEM

The Christian process was often regarded as unrelated to and unconnected with the natural and historic. Christianity was held to be either an election that uplifts the Christian above the world or an escape from the world, life and their contaminations. The capital text quoted for this view occurs in 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15, 17:—Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for

what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity ? or what communion hath light with darkness ? And what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever ? Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate . . . and touch no unclean thing. By identifying non-Christian faiths entirely with unrighteousness, infidelity and uncleanness, this highly reasonable admonition was turned into a charter of isolationism. Early Christianity received this doctrine as a heritage from Judaism. The Jews regarded themselves as a select people detached from the rest of the nations and chosen for a particular mission. The sense of a national vocation often degenerates into racial and spiritual pride and a kind of touch-me-not holiness that shuns with contempt the lesser breeds that know not the law. In the third century when Christianity spread into Egypt, it imbibed the asceticism of the East and regarded flesh, society and life as essentially sinful and contaminating and as something to be escaped from. Christians fled to the deserts and subjected themselves to tortures. In the Catholic Church, monasticism which in its higher aspects meant dedication and consecration to the service of God was by a series of falls reduced to a fear of earthly life and society which were deemed to be enemies of the godly life. Austerities, penances and mortifications became marks of spirituality. Protestantism on the whole was non-ascetic but the old strain found new expression in it also. Puritanism, an essentially moral and ecclesiastical reform movement, had in it elements that predisposed it to the type of recoil from life that was instinctive in asceticism. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* offers the classical theory of the world as doomed, with Christian as a pilgrim or more accurately as a refugee fleeing from the wrath to come. The sudden upsurge of science and the consequent new love for life, characteristic of the Renaissance, has washed away the Church from its ascetic moorings. Nevertheless the old outlook has reappeared and we have an illustration of it in twentieth century Barthianism which proclaims in a more refined and philosophic way its misgivings about the world. Barthians hold that Christianity represents a vertical descent from above on the horizontal flow of history and that the life from above touches life below without confluencing with it. To change the simile, the incarnation of Jesus should be conceived as a tangent touching humanity at a point without cutting into it. At the Tambaram Conference, Dr. Kraemer in his *Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* applied this view to the relation of Christianity to non-Christian religions and, disputing Dr. Farquhar's theory that Christianity was the crown of Hinduism, maintained that an unbridgeable chasm divides Christianity from other religions and that these religions cannot flow into Christianity by any process of evolution. This was the orthodox reaction to *Rethinking Missions* which advocated inter-religious cooperation.

The Christian Church in India is an extension of the sectarian Churches of the West and reflects faithfully some of the outworn

theologies of the past. Any original thinking was not only absent but was considered a sort of sin against the Holy Spirit. Naturally in such a context we cannot expect anything more than a docile submission to imported doctrines. Nevertheless two factors conspired to break this pathetic harmony. The convert who rebelled against Hinduism felt it impossible to submit to doctrinal thraldom. Among the born Christians there were some who, touched by the enfranchisement of the intellect in modern times, chafed at their shackles. A group of them essayed to interpret the Indian Christian mind in *Rethinking Christianity*, intended to be a constructive criticism of Kraemer's thesis. They pointed out that racial training and memory are, as it were, the 'spiritual eye' of the Indian, and the Christian inheriting the past has in Hinduism an organ of sight that reveals new phases of Christ and His message. The attempt to piece together petrified Hinduism with equally petrified Christianity may not yield any hopeful results and yet the living forces and insights of Hinduism that respond to Christ may disclose the preparation of the Hindu for accepting Christ. They pointed out that but for his Indian heritage no educated Indian would have seen in Jesus an avatar and that living Hinduism in a Christian forms part of his spiritual equipment, with which to interpret the significance of Christ to humanity.

With regard to the ascetic doctrine two pertinent remarks may be made. While there has been no period in Church history when it has been totally absent it has always been the creed of a microscopic minority. Christians found no difficulty in dealing with the world in all its activities, political and economic. A few warned the Church about the contaminations of sin. The rest established empires, extended trade, accomplished a partnership between the State and the Church without any protest of conscience or moral struggle. The Christian world by-passed monasteries and monasticism.

The view served the purpose of penance for the too enthusiastic plunge Western Christianity took into the flood of history. A hungry man dreams of banquets and feasts which give him a momentary relief in his destitution. Even so the more the West was dragged into world culture, the more it clung to this doctrine with the automatic impulse of a drowning man catching at a straw. The revulsion to life was conspicuous by its absence in the waking life of the West. The doctrine lost its bite, could not touch, much less plunge its teeth into the flesh.

Just when it received a quietus in the industrial West, the doctrine was revived by missionaries for the benefit of weaker converts from non-Christian faiths to Christianity. Most of these conversions are mass conversions motivated by a desire to escape the impossible conditions of society in Hinduism. Early Christians were babes requiring protection from outside contaminations. Hedges had to be built round and converts had to be admonished that safety lay in staying indoors away from the perils

of traffic. Not that the Western Christian was not subject to such infections. But the missionary did not see it as clearly in his country as he saw in other countries. In the West and in the East the Christian runs into the arms of the world cheerfully. Indian Christians trade, enter government service, are engaged in all professions, where they work along with non-Christians without any challenge from his faith. Within the Church, away from life they cling to the doctrine which imparts to them an aura of sanctity.

GO YE INTO THE WORLD

Curiously enough, the opposite view of associating and working with all the good and noble in the world, derives its strong support also from St. Paul, whose injunctions torn from their context and slightly misinterpreted formed the foundation of the Christian ascetic practices. In Phil. 4:8 the apostle says : Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Law and morality existed before Jesus. Hinduism and Buddhism condemn adultery as strongly as Judaism did. The high ethical precept of Jesus, do good to them that hate you (Matt. 5:44), finds its echo in Sri Buddha's precept, Never does hatred cease by hatred, Hatred ceases by love.

St. Paul found the light of the Jews, the Law, written in the hearts of the gentiles. He was a Roman citizen and proud of it. Both he and St. Peter thought Roman magistrates were ordained of God. The whole humanity travails to bring forth children of God. That God has spoken to every generation and has had witnesses in every race expresses what history confirms. Christianity doubtless brings a higher way, a new light to a world not entirely living in darkness but in the twilight. The direction not to be unequally yoked does not forbid being equally teamed.

There have been periods in history when non-Christians put Christians to shame by their higher ethics. The Ahimsa technique of Gandhi Mahatma and no-war ethics of Sri Buddha are instances. In direct contrast stand the two world wars where Christian nations tore each other to pieces. The destruction of Hiroshima in Japan where thousands were killed by atom bombs speaks of the lower moral standards of Christendom. In such a situation it sounds absurd to say that working with non-Christians weakens Christian faith. The theoretical superiority of the ethics of the Mount, rarely translated into practice except by occasionally saintly individuals, need not prevent us from joining others in efforts to reform, reclaim and redeem the world. We should not forget that Christian and non-Christian alike have a common human background. We can never promote Christianity by renouncing humanity. Reason, logic, and common sense are in favour of cooperation. The come-out view never

survived except when applied within a narrow limit. The broad currents of humanity flow into each other. Cooperation expresses the inner illumination of Christianity which hopes to expand till it covers all mankind.

The final court of appeal in such matters should be Jesus himself. His life and teachings, His hopes and visions for man leave no room for doubt. We do not find in Him the least trace of isolation. The very concept of incarnation implies the descent of God into man in order to divinize him. If ever the 'touch not the pitch' maxim has to be applied it should be in the relation of saints to sinners. Among Jews, the Samaritan, among Hindus the panchama, were put beyond the pale of social communion for fear of contamination. Jesus violated all the taboos of His race in consorting with publicans and sinners. That was the gravest charge brought against Him. Jesus did not yield an inch to the Jews. When John the Baptist hesitated to baptize Christ He remarked it 'becomes us to fulfil all righteousness'. His sermon on the Mount implies an intimate relation between His followers and the world. Jesus praised the syropheneccian woman (Matt. 15:26) and the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:10) for faith wanting in Jews. Seeking the lost and saving the sinners can only be achieved by a love that identifies itself with the lost and the condemned. Jesus brought to humanity a conquering power that leavens, and transforms, and His followers can descend with Him even to Sheol without fear. A weak-kneed, pusillanimous, Christianity fears contaminations and bashes in disinfectants to escape epidemics.

CAST AWAY ALL DOUBTS

If the above arguments have any force the choice between the austere and the brotherly way should not present any difficulty. God's love descends not only on Christians but also on non-Christians. His theatre of operation is humanity, not Church. If Christ was ordained to be the redeemer of the world, it was necessary that response to His call by way of moral training should have been distributed in all races and religions and hearts. The duty of the Christian, the necessities of evangelism, alike command him to discern the pathway which Christ opens towards Himself in every religion, to promote the moral sensitivity in man to Jesus and to work with and lead men along this prepared road to Christianity. Christian ideas and ideals are not imprisoned in Christians and Churches. They have spilled over into the broad world. Cultures have mixed and religions have absorbed much from outside. In most fields of activity a Christian may choose, he may meet his own ethics and the handiwork of his Lord. Let us therefore leave all doubts behind, eschew pharisaism and march boldly without misgivings into the stream of life. The main issue that confronts us is not whether we should cooperate with the non-Christians but where and how to do it in practical life. We propose to enquire in the second

part what fresh fields are open for cooperative activity for Christians in India.

II

REGIONS FOR COOPERATIVE ACTIVITY

The regions within which Christians may cooperate with non-Christians are six in number, namely religion, morality, society, politics, economics and international affairs. We shall concern ourselves here with the first two of these, religion and morality, since it is in these regions that cooperation of Christians with non-Christians is most frequently criticized.

COOPERATION IN RELIGION

The orthodox Christian may think it preposterous to suggest any cooperation between Christians and non-Christians in Religion. But looked at from a different angle the proposal wears a different aspect and sounds reasonable. The Kingdom of God under different names has been a common dream of humanity. Moreover we observe a family resemblance between the vices and virtues of Christianity and other religions, though it may be true that each has also its characteristic moral traits. Indian national vices, caste- and class-consciousness, communalism, corruption and characterlessness are possessed by Christians and Hindus alike. I do not see why religions should not combine their reformist activities where they serve a good purpose. Such a combination may give mutual courage and strength. A group of reformers drawn from different religions, pooling their resources to root out these vices, may help to see with a kindly eye the values in other religions. Such a group offers a living contact to transmit the vital energies of one religion to another far better than wranglings, disputations and mutual recriminations. These will be silenced in the comradeship of the crusade. The impression that religion deals with sin and redemption only emphasizes one half, the lesser half, of the truth. Perfection, the other half of the truth often forgotten, stresses Christian growth and goal. Be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect, is as much a command as, Sin no more. The tendency in each religion to look at spots, the leprous spots, in other religions warps and distorts normal vision and turns us into moles and bats averse to light. Should we restore normal vision to religious men, the gains of cooperation may be more than we think it possible. A Christian may learn more from Keshab Chandra Sen's fervent love for Jesus, more about the Holy Spirit from Arabindo's exposition than from the tepid normal Christian services in the Church. The advantages to non-Christian religions would be even more conspicuous. A communion of religions at the highest levels—to adopt current political jargon—may be both revealing and inspiring. Such a cooperation need not involve any sacrifice of principles or essential loyalties.

The Parliament of Religions at Chicago did a good deal to educate each religion about other religions. The contacts however remained at intellectual level. An advance was made at a London session to have common worship at Westminster. Though members of other religions participated in the worship, Christian obscurantists distributed pamphlets and raised objections to such a course. Now that secularism has become a pressing danger to all religions, closing the ranks among their followers to meet their common adversary seems both prudent and wise and urgent. Science arms secularism with powerful instruments of persuasion and religions will forfeit their hold on humanity unless a common plan of action is devised. Response will be forthcoming once we cross the barricades of tradition and grasp the hands of fellowship stretched across the borders. My experience in this matter proves that if the inter-religious conferences draw the chaff on one hand, on the other they skim the cream in other faiths. Sincerity, love, respect and honesty form the right atmosphere for the Spirit to thrive. The United Nations' common prayer hall contributes more to promote international amity and fellowship than its political debates in open sessions.

COOPERATION IN MORALITY

The challenge of M.R.A. has not been widely responded to by the Churches. Judging without any predilection towards or bias against and not allowing theological views to shape opinion, it may be said that M.R.A. demonstrates three truths for Christians. 1. What seem to be the most inhospitable and unpromising areas for moral work such as politics and economics turn out to be not so formidable when we enter to deal with them in a proper way. 2. The cooperation between Christians and non-Christians in these aspects of national life are practicable and when practised mutually uplifting. 3. Divisions of men into warring camps throughout society interposes insuperable difficulties. Interestingly however the Christian meets unsuspected difficulties and also unexpected allies and supporters who respond to moral appeals. The main source of misunderstandings in industrial labour has been the pictures drawn of the Boss and the Worker in popular press and propaganda, but when brought together they find they are in reality unlike the portraits they have formed in their minds of each other, that both sides are human and willing to accommodate. The experience of M.R.A. has shown that in all circumstances there are some, larger in number than we anticipate, who respond to higher ideals. The division of mankind into goats and sheep does more harm than charity can repair. The Society of Friends in their several experiences have a similar tale to tell. We hope Christian leaders will try the M.R.A. and Friends' techniques more extensively than they have done in communal conflicts where the need for reconciliation remains as great and urgent as elsewhere.

Morality has a tendency to extricate itself from will and emotion from which it generates and to create a ground of its own to stand upon. If we study the life of Jesus, we find much that can be communicated as life only, as well as much that stands after emerging from His personality, apart from Him. The Sermon of the Mount can be adopted by a Hindu and Christian alike. Morality travels into the universal life quicker than religion. Our Constitution takes for its foundation liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. These morals of democracy though born in the French Revolution have spread all over the world and influenced political idealism and ethics. The objectivity of morals make it a common vineyard for labourers. Christians in this country have almost a virgin forest to cultivate with regard to fundamental morals. They can not only be vigilant in protecting them but also propagate them among masses. The golden rule of Christianity, to do unto others as you would like to be done by, of socialism, Give according to your talents and receive according to your needs, of utilitarianism, the highest good of the largest number—are ethical foundations of secular life. These foundations have to be laid by Christians and non-Christians together.

Unfortunately, religious ethics flounders at the base and talks more of the Ten Commandments than of the Sermon of the Mount. At the base, morality presents a choice between two incompatibles, good and evil, and at higher altitudes a choice between lower and higher, between grades of compatibles. Theft and adultery are incompatible with property and chastity respectively. One cannot have both and one has to choose between them. Selfishness within bounds may be not a sin but a lower virtue than selflessness. We have not risen to the level of regarding the choice between good and better to be as imperative as the choice between good and bad. The highest moral virtues of religion call for comradeship, joint action and planning so far unknown to history. Religions agree about immorality but have no consensus of opinion of basic morality. I have seen the sinners in all religions forming a masonic brotherhood. I have yet to see saints in religions shaking hands.

Recently some of our prominent politicians issued a manifesto calling attention to the national vices of casteism, linguism, communalism and provincialism—all new manifestations of the spirit of caste. The appeal looks like bolting the door after the colt is stolen. Politicians who clamoured for linguistic provinces have forfeited the right to preach sermons on unity. All the same whoever errs and however egregiously, facts have to be faced. To separatism, we have to add corruption and want of character to get anything like an adequate list of national vices. Corruption prevails in the administration and among people. It runs through the whole of the body politic—being in the blood and not localizable in a limb. Since everybody is involved in it, nobody is anxious to eradicate it. Commercial immorality has

cost us a good deal of the foreign trade which we so much need for implementing the Second Plan. It has lowered us in the estimation of the world. The mechanism of correction, tardy, clumsy, defective, has to be changed. The bribe-giver and the bribe-taker deserve short shift. The third of the trio, characterlessness, takes a heavy toll. All may not have attained to saintly morality but elementary principles shaping life, called character, are within everybody's reach. The proportion of moral failures in India in social and political life stands dangerously high. National morality offers a hitherto unavailed opening for action. National vices are hard to deal with as everybody turns a blind eye towards them. They are called national because they infect all religions, though they are rarely confessed. To cope adequately with them demands men of strong will and determined purpose from every religion. No Christian can afford to throw stones at his unredeemed brethren as these vices taint him quite as much. M.R.A. in India should bring within its jurisdiction national morality.

Ethics has enlarged its domain very widely in the last two centuries. The Ten Commandments were sufficient for the primitive tribe of Israel but hundreds of such prohibitions in the Indian Penal Code are insufficient for modern India. Under the name of codes, professions have framed their own laws of conduct. The underworld has its own code and there are things which even criminals cannot commit without losing caste such as 'peaching'. Ethics has invaded sport and games have enriched the moral vocabulary. Gamblers abhor marked cards. Woodhouse, writing mostly about the sick, lazy, good-for-nothings known as lounge lizards, points out that they too have their totems and taboos in his 'code of Woosters'. A research of this baffling phenomenon of morality, contracting at the brain-end and expanding at the tail-end, may throw much light on national morals and arm the reformers with knowledge that may be of much help. Whether a similar expansion of morals has taken place in the East as in the West requires investigation by reformers from every religion, in view of their vociferous complaint of the decline of morals.

THE GOALS OF COOPERATION

Cooperation may be static or dynamic, may stand still or move towards a goal or destination. Towards what goals should our cooperation be directed? Our study will be defective without a glance at aims and objectives of cooperation. To the Christian the grand terminus of all his efforts should be clear. It rings through life and teachings of Jesus, Kingdom of God. What does this mean in concrete terms?

1. The extension of the family into the State. Primitive races based their expansion on the blood-bond, that is descent from a real or supposed ancestor. Thus they developed clan

from family. In the modern world we have to transcend the blood-bond. A new cement has to be discovered. Territory and nationality have been tried and found wanting. Where and how shall we discover the new bond? Anyway the encroachment of State into the family has to be countered, for it robs life of love and sacrifice and other higher ethical values of the family. The family has to be enlarged but in the process we should not lose all that constitutes the family as the high water mark of life. The State ought to be family writ large and not family a State writ small.

2. In India custom has to be replaced by conscience. The great obstacle to progress in India during the last few centuries has been custom which has imprisoned the spirit of India in traditions and institutions. Custom preserves life in cement-moulds and ultimately kills all desire for progress. Custom has accomplished its purpose of preservation. We are in the transition stage between yugas. Moulds have to be broken and the spirit liberated to brood over the waters of life and bring forth a new creation.

3. The aim of the Kingdom of God should be kept in view. We should be not only pragmatic but also idealistic. A new earth and a new heaven, a new mankind, are our ambitions. For the salvation of Sagar's children heavenly Ganges had to be brought down to earth. So also for the redemption of mankind Jesus brought down the Holy Spirit from heaven. We should make it available for mankind. This is true evangelism. The State and Science are both rivals of religion. They are both trying to take the Kingdom of God by violence. Can we impart it naturally?

4. Democracy, a dynamic concept, develops and unfolds. Neither capitalism nor communism has exhausted its possibilities. If democracy signifies government of the people, through the people, by the people, we have to make much headway and look beyond representative government. Self-governance of the people by themselves has yet to be explored and realized. The circle has to be completed by restoring this missing arc to the orb that is incomplete.

We have considered the two ways of the Christian life—the apartheid and the brotherly, and tried to show that the latter and not the former embodies the spirit of Jesus. Christianity brings us the power that enters humanity in all its parts and transmutes and transfigures them. This cannot be done by preaching and teaching or by dogmas and creeds. It can only be done by skin-to-skin contact transmitting the life-energies.

We have nothing to do with the world; we are in the world but not of the world; we are for transforming the world into the Kingdom of God. Thus expressed in varying ways the mission of Christians in the world was conceived in the past and has to be conceived in the future. Christianity, itself light, life and love, does not shun darkness and death, and is not afraid of hatred.

To reduce these attributes of life into a notation of ideas and propositions is completely to misunderstand the religion of Jesus. Christianity descends, transforms and loves. The great reformation of Christianity in India reverses the process of the Reformation in the West. There religions were made propositional—dogma and doctrine. Here they can be made prepositional—religion that works *with* the people.

★

I seek Whom I know not

*I seek whom I know not !
He draws my soul ;
I go and know not that I go !*

*Through the shoreless dark
A still small voice calls me ;
I grope my way unseeing, unthinking :
I know only that God is.*

*Who shall tell me
By what name to call Him,
Where to find Him ?*

*I have neither knowledge
Nor have I yoga ;
I only follow the scent.*

*Ah, where shall I find Him
To whom I have given my heart ?*

Bengali Hymn

The Christian Message and Non-Christian Religions

EMANI SAMBAYYA

(Part of a paper read at a B.D. College Teachers' Conference held at Bangalore in September 1957.)

The determination of the relationship between the Gospel and other religions is a complex problem. The Christian message sometimes assumes the form of judgement, and at other times is given as a message of fulfilment; sometimes it is proclaimed as a better and more excellent way. The New Testament furnishes us with examples of all of these. Thus in Acts 14:15-17 the Christian message is given in the form of a mild warning: 'Ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is.' The concept of fulfilment seems to have been employed in Acts 17:23 where St. Paul says to the Athenians: 'What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you.' In the Epistle to the Hebrews (1:1) the Gospel is stated as something better and final: 'God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son.' Both the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle to the Ephesians refer to the work of Christ as a new and living way to God (Ephesians 2:13).

Thus the quest for God, whether it is the Upanishadic search for Reality, or through the sadhanas of later Hinduism, or the eightfold path of Buddhism, may form a relevant background for the message of the Gospel. At one time the missionary evangelist was critical of the other religions. In our time we are learning afresh how to present the Christian message to our contemporaries in the Asian lands. As we become aware of our obligation to bear witness to Christ we are faced with the problem of the right theological approach: 'In what relationship does the message of the Cross stand to the religious environment?' Ultimately our problem is one of communication.

One method of communicating the Gospel is through a thorough grasp on the one hand of the nature of the love of God as manifested to mankind in Jesus Christ, and a sympathetic understanding of the religious environment of the Indian people on the other. The Bible presents us with the living God whose

character is self-giving or love at its best. Whether in creating or in caring for the world, God is the Saving God. Man on the other hand, due to his finitude and freedom, manifests a puzzling response to the self-giving activity of God. He longs to belong to God and at the same time aspires to be independent of Him. The religions of the world are systematized expressions of this dialectic response of man to God. They belong to the sphere of God-relatedness and at the same time constitute the adversaries of God. They recognize the sovereignty of God yet tend to resist it because it seems to interfere with their pride and pretensions. The best example of this attitude is furnished by Judaism which resisted the Messiah. Against these pretensions the wrath of God is revealed, but it is always a saving wrath. Hence all religions are exposed to the judgement and the saving mercy of God. The message of the Gospel to everyone of them is 'Repent and believe'.

But the attitude of the Christian Gospel towards other religions cannot be expressed by means of any one single category such as fulfilment or judgement. Dr. Kraemer in his latest book has modified his original standpoint on this subject and said that positive religions are a 'yes' and a 'no' to the revelation of God. Though this dialectical mode of thinking is not familiar to us Orientals it seems to express the complex nature of the relation of the Gospel to the other faiths.

CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

In one respect the other religions may be viewed as forerunners of the Gospel. The Fathers of the Church found both continuity and discontinuity between Christianity and other religions. Irenaeus sees no other plan in the universe but the plan of God to sum up all things in Christ. Man is constantly being trained from the stage of the Decalogue to the Gospel. The law is a schoolmaster to Christ; the law trained mankind till it was able to bear the full divine revelation in Jesus Christ. Hence it is said that Christ came in the fullness of time. The Fathers interpret the fullness of time to mean that there was a continuity of people ready to receive the Messiah. The Blessed Virgin Mary's acceptance of the call to become the mother of the Messiah is herefore understood as an act performed in a representative capacity. Representing those who were waiting for the consolation of Israel the Blessed Virgin said: 'Be it unto me according to thy word'. Viewed thus there is a continuity between Judaism and the Gospel. But there was a break in the continuity between the time that Christ was announced and the time when He actually appeared on the plane of history. Irenaeus explains this discontinuity by referring to John the Baptist the forerunner of Christ. He says: 'When a king is coming he sends envoys. But when he actually arrives we see the difference between him and his envoys. There is no longer any need of forerunners. They

have to disappear in order that he may appear in all his glory.' It is in some such sense that the Fathers held views both of continuity and discontinuity between the Gospel and pagan religions. According to them the evidence of God's revealing activity in other religions is seen in the operation of the *logos spermatikos*.

The determination of the relationship between the Gospel and other religions is a complex problem. Our understanding of the relationship should primarily be based on the character and purpose of God as revealed in the Bible—and in particular in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is eternally longing to impart Himself to His creatures; He pursues this purpose without haste and without rest till it is accomplished. Nothing will deter Him from His immutable will to our blessedness except the unwillingness of man to have God in his mind. But God continues to reveal Himself now as wrath over all unrighteousness and now as supreme charity in its effort to rescue man. His self-disclosure in the Bible casts a searchlight on the religious systems of mankind, which men have erected in their effort to want God and at the same time to escape from Him. The religions of mankind then may be regarded as systems containing genuine elements of search for God and specimens of defensive mechanism against the claims of the living God. Ultimately it is only a thorough grasp of the nature of the Gospel which will provide us with a critique of other religions.

It is difficult to deny that most other religions manifest certain facets of a genuine search for God. Yet when the Saviour comes into their midst calling them home they resist His claims. The Messiah comes to seek and to save; but as He rescues men from the thraldom of the powers which hold them in bondage a conflict ensues. This is the Messianic conflict, a conflict which figures prominently in the Synoptic narrative. The same conflict is reproduced in the experience of the non-Christian in his decision for Christ. The claims of Christ come into conflict with the pretensions of pride, prestige, caste and worldly position. The act of conversion involves a clear break with the former pagan life—a discontinuity between paganism and the Gospel.

FULFILMENT AND CONFLICT

It is not easy to reconcile the idea of fulfilment with that of conflict or judgement. On the one hand we have the saying of our Lord: 'I have not come to destroy but to fulfil' (Matthew 5:17). The Bhakti writings contain many foregleams of God of which the Incarnate Life of our Lord is the crown and fulfilment. On the other hand our Lord says: 'Every plant which my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up' (Matthew 15:13), suggesting a judgement on many aspects of positive religions. Generally speaking religions apart from the Gospel stand as monuments of man's effort to get re-united to God on his (man's) own terms.

and by his own efforts. Pre-eminently Buddhism and Jainism are such efforts at salvation by self-effort. They manifest a bewildering confusion of God's word and man's ingenuity.

The Christian apologist in India has to work with the concepts both of fulfilment and of conflict, resisting the temptation to oversimplify the problem as Farquhar and Kraemer have tended to do at times. Some light is thrown upon our problem by a closer study of the Old Testament idea of the Covenant. God's promise to Abraham was threefold: to give him the promised land, to bless all nations in him, and that of his race the Saviour should be born. But prior to His covenant with Abraham God made the covenant with Noah, not to upset the natural order of things; and the rainbow is the sign of the covenant. Here we should note that what joins us to God is a unilateral promise and not a bilateral contract as the Pharisees had thought. God's promise is not at the mercy of our unfaithfulness. Nonetheless it is true that we can put ourselves out of the reach of the promises of God. The continued infidelity of the Jews is a case in point. But Christian optimism, that is a Christian faith in the city of God, is founded upon God's promises, and on God's immutable will to our blessedness. The city of God is gradually being built up because God is faithful to His promises. Thus emerges the Church, the new Israel which is the token of the continued faithfulness of God to His covenant. Viewed thus the relationship between Christianity and the other faiths is one of succession. God has been as it were seeking for entrance into the stream of history. It seemed as if He succeeded when Zarathustra uttered his Gathas, or Gautama taught the Dharma, or when the songs of the suffering servant were articulated. Fulfilling the values in all these events God's faithfulness to the covenant found its highest expression when He came down and dwelt with us in Jesus Christ. In the order of continuity Christianity represents the highest point of evolution.

But there would have been no problem for the Christian apologist if the positive religions had allowed themselves to be superseded. They actually present rival claims to the Gospel; therefore conflict between them and Christianity seems inevitable. Judaism is a very good example of this refusal to be superseded by the Gospel. The non-Christian faiths refuse to accept the new life offered in Christianity and thus face conflict. It is in such a situation that the concept of judgement has to be employed in Christian apology.

Yet we cannot afford to lose sight of the concept of fulfilment. Once again it is useful to go back to the covenant of God with Abraham. The migration of Abraham is an epoch-making event in history. Abraham is an example of conversion to the living God in the total act of faith. His call was to leave his home and his kindred and thus to make a clean break with his past life (Hebrews 6:13-24). The object of the covenant was the salvation of mankind: 'All nations shall be blessed in thee.' The

coming of God's kingdom was set before him as it were in three stages: first the emergence of Israel as the people of God, second the coming of the Messiah, and third the Church as the new Israel. These three epochs of history sum up the object of Abraham's faith: for he is called to be the father of a mighty nation, through one of his descendants God's blessing would spread over all the world; and all nations of the world would be saved in Him. Among the pagans of the world Abraham stands like a solitary figure, firmly believing that the nations of the world would be saved. This is the peak of Abraham's faith. The Christian evangelist must stand by the side of Abraham and believe with all his heart that the Indian people will one day believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. You may say that there is very little to warrant such a hope in the present situation; but then there was much less to warrant the faith of Abraham! The salvation of the world is still the object of faith and hope. That all things should be summed up in Christ, that the kingdoms of the world would become the kingdom of Christ—this is the faith of Abraham; that is the day which Abraham saw and rejoiced (John 8:56). Thus Abraham inaugurated a great missionary contemplation.

The promise made to Abraham was not going to become invalid through the infidelity of Israel. Because Israel proved unfaithful God was not going to take back His promise. The history of Israel is the history of the continued faithfulness of God to His covenant despite the infidelity of Israel. This history of Israel prefigures the relationship between mankind and Christ. The faithfulness of God wears out the infidelity and intransigence of man. This is the mystery of God's patience which transcends our unbelief and self-will. Examples of this we can see in the conception of Sarah contrary to human hope and expectation, or better still the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary who brought forth the Saviour without human agency, or the readiness of Abraham to offer Isaac the son of promise, a prototype of God giving His eternal Son for the salvation of a rebellious world, or the self-giving of our Lord to the Church however unworthy she may be.

Continuing the story of Abraham we read in Genesis 14:18-19 that Melchisedek brought bread and wine to Abraham and blessed him. He appears as a priest-king of ancient Canaan, welcoming Abraham, the bearer of the covenant. What was the religion of Canaan before the arrival of Abraham? It was the nature religion of mankind, and Melchisedek appears as the priest faithful to the covenant of Noah. He came to give Abraham the greeting of primitive religion. He is the priest of the God who created heaven and earth; his sacrifice was the sacrifice of all mankind, for man is the high priest of all creation.

The meeting of Melchisedek with Abraham is of great significance. Abraham seemed as if he was inaugurating a new order of things. The representatives of primitive natural religion could

have reacted in a hostile way ; they could have clung to their old religion (which is of God) and refused to take any notice of this man Abraham chosen by God to set up a new religion. That is what positive religions do to the Gospel today, and that is what Judaism did to the Messiah two thousand years ago. But that is not the way a forerunner reacts. When the one for whom he has prepared the way arrives he must give way. But the temptation is to cling to the old. Buddha was one of Christ's great forerunners and yet will probably be the last adversary to accept His claims. He prepared the way for Christ in India ; it is even said that the Hindu idea of *avatara* arose after seeing his beautiful life. Buddha was the best representative of natural religion. But today Buddhism is an opponent of Christianity.

The Epistle to the Hebrews says that Christ's priesthood was after the order of Melchisedek. Our Lord showed continuity with the covenant made with Noah whose high priest was Melchisedek. Thus Christ was carrying into reality what was prefigured in the Old Testament. All the efforts ever made to worship God and enter into the communion with Him were completed and perfected in Christ's sacrifice.

We see this clearly in the sacramentalism of Christianity. Sacramentalism is in fact the point at which Christianity is most deeply bound up with the natural religions of the world. There seem to be all sorts of mysterious ways in which men belong to Christ and are saved, and yet it is necessary that all men should own the sovereignty of Christ. The problem is to be considered on a sacramental plane. Take for instance the sacrament of baptism. In one form or the other this is a widespread religious rite. The Jews practised it. Baptism was practised in the sea before a person was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries. First came the purifying rite, then the initiation, and finally the imparting of the secret doctrine ; this is the order of initiation in many religions. Think of the ardent desire for ritual bathing in the Ganges and other sacred rivers. Might we not hope that the waters of the Ganges might be laden with grace so that those who bathe in it might derive not only external purification but also a new birth ? Is there not in this bathing in the Ganges a sort of anticipation of what one day may be the baptizing of the religions of India ? Consider the sacred meal signifying communion with God ; the feasting on the sacrificed animal at the Kali Temple. In every religion there is an obscure intuition that material things convey inward spiritual grace and through them we come to God. This universal sacramentalism is a kind of foreshadowing of the way in which Christianity carries the precious values of other religions further, without destroying them. On this sacramental plane positive religions are a prefiguring and a preparation for Christ.

It will be clear from what we have said that no one single category such as fulfilment or judgement, continuity or discontinuity, can in any way adequately express the relationship

between the Christian faith and non-Christian religions. Sometimes we have to use one category, sometimes we have to use the other ; such difficulties are inevitable if we remember that all religions contain both aspirations for God and resistance to His beneficent working and power.



No Refreshing except in Thee

*Round Thy lotus feet, O let my love be wrapt ; and it matters naught where my body lie,
In city residence or forest hermitage, in rags of poverty, robes of wealth :
Teach me but to be faithful unto Thee.
Like the serpent of his gem deprived, so am I in agony without a vision of Thee, O Lord.
Let me not by praise or blame be moved : within the depths of my soul let me enshrine Thee :
And Thou wilt hold me dear, my Lord.*

Tulsidas



We should go to God

*What messenger need go to the ants' house ? At the sight of sugar they come running to it.
Does the giver stand waiting when no beggar is near ?
It is the beggar who runs to better himself.
Do food and water say, 'Come, eat us up !'
It is the hungry man who goes in quest of them.
The patient runs to the physician to get rid of his sufferings.
One who means to better himself, says Tuka, he listens to God's praises, he cultivates a pleasure in this.*

Tukaram

The Modern Revival of the Non-Christian Religions

E. C. DEWICK

(An address given at St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead, England)

This theme may seem rather remote from the problems of the average Parish in England, whether in town or country. But today the world is a unity, as never before ; and what happens in Africa or the East may vitally affect life in a Lancashire mill or a Cheshire parish. Nor are 'non-Christian religions' now confined to far-off lands ; in some forms they are active in this country. So, if there is a revival among them, it may well call for our attention in England.

There has certainly been a significant change, of late, in the attitude of the non-Christian religions towards Christianity. Broadly, this is a change from 'defence' to 'attack'. Thirty years ago, Dr. Kraemer realized this :

'Everywhere, in Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, etc., there is manifest a heightening of religious group-consciousness, embodying itself in movements for reform, propaganda and concerted opposition to Christian missions.'

(The Christian Message, p. 46.)

This is evident, if we compare the policy of outstanding non-Christian leaders a century ago with that of their successors today. Ram Mohun Roy in Hinduism, and Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan in Islam, while defending the adequacy of their own religions for their own people, spoke of Christ with admiration, and commended his teachings to the young men of their own faith. Today, the leading spokesmen of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam are confidently asserting that they have something *better* than Christianity to offer to the world. The great Buddhist Missionary Campaign of 1956 was on a scale previously without parallel. In Colombo, a huge flood-lit image of the Buddha bore the caption : 'This is the *True* Light of the World!' Although no mass-conversions have been reported, the effects of all this, even in the West, are not negligible. Chaplains of schools and colleges in England have lately told me that sixth-form boys and undergraduates have started 'Buddhist Societies', numbering in each case a dozen or a score. Moreover, Theosophy, Vedantism and

the 'Wisdom Cults' are spreading—probably more than most of us realize.

This brings a challenge to the Church—sometimes openly hostile, sometimes in the form of a friendly appeal: 'Will you Christians not abandon your *exclusive* claims, and join with us in the vital struggle against Materialistic Communism and Scientific Scepticism?' To ignore or evade this challenge would be most unwise. For the Church today is no longer in the position of generally-recognized superiority which she once held. Dr. Max Warren has said that the hymn 'Onward, Christian Soldiers!' and specially the words

'Like a mighty army
Moves the Church of God!'

need to be revised today, because the Church is more like a 'Resistance-Movement' operating in enemy territory, than an all-conquering army. Bishop Berggraev has recently appealed to Church-leaders to consider whether a drastic revision of our whole conception of 'Missions' is not an urgent necessity today, in view of the new challenge to the Church.

But what *should* be the answer of the Church to this challenge?

Some would reply by a vigorous counter-attack. They maintain that the non-Christian religions are the enemies of Christianity, to be destroyed, and replaced by the One True Faith. That view is held today by many missionaries of 'Fundamentalist' sympathies, and by 'Continentalists' of the Barthian school. It was in the past the view of Tertullian, of Luther and Calvin, of nearly all the great pioneer-missionaries; and it is implied in the military metaphors of most of our missionary hymns.

But of late it has been widely deprecated, as being both ineffective and morally wrong. The late Bishop Cash of Worcester (a former missionary to Muslims) came to the conclusion that 'controversy is *futile* as a line of missionary approach'. (*Christendom and Islam*, p. 10.) Moreover, many missionaries feel that controversial attacks on the faith of others are not in accord with the spirit and example of Our Lord, and all too often lead to misrepresentation and unfair judgments; nor can they reconcile a *wholesale* condemnation of other religions with what they have seen in the lives of non-Christians, or what they have read in their sacred books. So the controversial method has become less prevalent in missionary circles today.

Others would reply to the challenge with an admission that there are good elements in other religions, but would claim that all these (together with much else of value) are to be found in the Gospel of Christ. That was the view of Justin Martyr, and the Alexandrian philosophers Clement and Origen; it has been the predominant view in missions of the 'Catholic' type; it was advocated in 1840 by Frederick Denison Maurice and at greater

length (in 1907) in a volume entitled *Mankind and the Church*, by a group of Anglican missionary-bishops.

In the early years of this century, this view became predominant in missionary circles. It combined a kindly (if somewhat patronizing) attitude to other religions with an uncompromising affirmation of the supremacy and finality of Christianity. But of late, it has been subjected to searching criticism, on the ground that

- (1) Hinduism and Buddhism are based on principles so different from those of Judaism and Christianity that the former cannot be 'fulfilled' in the latter; and
- (2) That Islam (later in origin than Christianity), so far from being 'fulfilled' in the Gospel, claims that the Gospel finds its 'fulfilment' in the Qu'ran.

Dr. Kraemer, in particular, has denounced the idea that other religions are 'fulfilled' in Christianity as 'abhorrent'—except perhaps with regard to Judaism (*Continuity*, p. 5).

Dr. Kraemer himself advocates another response to the challenge. He deprecates any attempt either to *condemn* or *commend* the non-Christian religions, and would have the missionary simply present the Gospel as something 'entirely other', having no 'point of contact' with any non-Christian religion. Whether they are 'good' or 'bad' is beside the point; for in any case, they stand quite *apart from* God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ; and no *comparison* between the two is possible, for one cannot compare two things that have nothing in common.

This view, that the Biblical Revelation is completely 'discontinuous' from all other religious experience, is widely held on the Continent, and rests on the doctrine that God is 'entirely other' than man, and the Incarnation of God in Christ 'entirely other' than God's work in History or Nature. But in England, and in the Churches of the 'Catholic Tradition', where the Incarnation has often been regarded as 'the supremely characteristic act of the universal activity of God' (Canon Quick), this 'Theory of Discontinuity' has been widely criticized, as being inconsistent with the teaching of Our Lord, who constantly *likened* the Kingdom of God to human life in his parables, and bade us think of God under the human image of 'Our Father'. It also seems inconsistent with the undeniable *resemblance* between many of the doctrines and practices of Christianity and those of other religions. Dr. Kraemer entitles his view 'Biblical Realism'; but is it, in fact, either 'Biblical' or 'Realistic'?

If then no one of the above answers to the challenge of the non-Christian religions is wholly satisfactory, what alternative remains? I have no 'ready-made' programme to propound; but I would suggest a few considerations which may point the way towards the right course to follow:

(1) We should firmly refuse to follow Dr. Kraemer when he would have us to abandon the attempt to *compare* our faith with others. Certainly we should always remember that our human judgments are liable to error. But to refuse to exercise our reason and our moral judgment in such matters would be to neglect a trust that God has given us. Our Lord himself constantly appealed to his hearers to use their own judgment (Mark 14:24, Luke 12:57, John 7:24). A sober comparison of Christ with other teachers, and of his message with theirs, will, I believe, in the long run, convince the majority of thoughtful men and women of the supremacy of the Christian Faith, and will gradually discredit the 'special pleading' which marks a good deal of non-Christian propaganda today.

In all such comparisons, we must be scrupulously fair. Sometimes, Christians have selected the *finest* elements in Christianity and have set these alongside the worst corruptions of other religions. That is *not* 'judging righteous judgement'.

(2) Our claims for the supremacy of Christ must be substantiated by showing the supremacy of Christian living *in practice*. Dr. Radhakrishnan once said to me: 'You know, most of your Christians seem to us to be very ordinary people making very extraordinary claims for their religion!' Here is a penetrating challenge, which we have no right either to evade or to resent; though for my part, I do not find it easy to answer. For while I have found that *real* Christians of the best type are *finer* men and women than *any* non-Christians that I have met, it seems to me that the *average* level of professing Christians and church-goers, both in England and in India, is not, in character and spirit, *unmistakably* higher than that of the world outside. And as long as that is the case, the world is likely to form its estimate of Christianity by the *lives* of the majority of its adherents, rather than by the *claims* they make on its behalf.

(3) If we take Our Lord's teaching and example as our standard, we shall (I think) avoid *wholesale* condemnation (or commendation) of either systems of religion or their adherents; because in almost all cases there is a mixture of good and evil. Christ dealt with each individual on a *personal* basis; and we should approach a non-Christian, not first with the thought 'he (or she) is a Hindu, or a Muslim', but rather 'one whose welfare and salvation is dear to the heart of God'. And when reading the non-

Christian Scriptures, we may well bear in mind Archbishop W. Temple:

‘By the Word of God, Isaiah, Plato, Zoroaster, Buddha, and Confucius uttered and wrote such truths as they declared. There is only One Divine Light.’ (*Readings in St. John’s Gospel*, 1, p. 10.)

Finally, what shall we reply to the invitation to join with the non-Christian religions in inter-religious co-operation against Materialism and Scepticism? In the past, very few Christians have been prepared to contemplate the possibility of this, or to admit that other religions may have a distinctive contribution to make towards a fuller understanding of Truth. This was, however, implied in the hymn by the blind poet-mystic, George Matheson, of the Church of Scotland:

‘Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all ;
Gather our rival faiths within thy fold !’

(*Note* : ‘Gather us in’ ; not ‘Gather *them* in’.)

And Albert Schweitzer has urged that Christian and non-Christian ‘should move towards a way of thinking which shall eventually be shared in common by all mankind’. (*Life*, by G. Seaver, p. 276.)

Such views have so far received little support from leaders of the Church. But for myself, I should not wish to close the door against experiments in inter-religious fellowship, both in social service, conference, and worship. We shall need to guard against good-natured compromise, and superficial assent to formulas that cover deep-rooted differences ; and we should refuse to assent in advance to dogmas such as ‘that all religions are essentially the same, or at least of equal value’. But, given on both sides a sincerely open mind, and a readiness to accept guidance from the Spirit of God, I believe that inter-religious co-operation is consistent with the mind of Christ and with the main message of the Bible ; bearing in mind these great texts :

‘If God has given to them the like gift of the Spirit as to us—who are we, that we should withstand God?’ (cf. *Acts 11:17*.)

‘Be ready to render unto every man a reason for the faith that is in you ; yet with meekness and fear.’ (*1 Peter 3:15*.)

‘Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.’ (*1 Thess. 5:21*.)

The Uniqueness of Hebrew History

MAURICE BLANCHARD

II

Having considered in the first study the uniqueness of the Hebrew concept of history as seen in the Books of Kings, it is proposed now to consider the uniqueness of Hebrew history as seen in the Books of Kings. Perhaps there might be some indications that this unique concept of history was largely responsible for the unique development of their history ; but that will not be the main concern in this study. Our main concern is practical, and in closing an effort will be made to show what practical lessons may be learned from this rapid survey of Hebrew history.

SOLUTION OFFERED TO PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

Three basic problems with which philosophy has always concerned itself relate to the nature of reality, the nature of man, and the nature of morality. A little earlier than the Greek philosophers, a little earlier than Buddha and Confucius, the prophets who wrote Hebrew history dealt with the same problems with which these philosophers were later to wrestle. The amazing thing is that the prophets found their answers to these problems in the realm of historical events, rather than in theories and intellectual speculations. One of the unique things about Hebrew history as recorded in the Books of Kings is that in the realm of historical fact, what men can see and touch, it gives elementary answers to man's greatest problems. Right here is laid the foundation upon which was later built the whole Hebrew-Christian solution of these problems.

At the risk of over-simplification, it is proposed to state here in summary fashion the various solutions that have been proposed to these three problems and to compare the solution offered by the facts of Hebrew history. Regarding the nature of reality it has been the tendency of philosophy to emphasize on the one hand the spiritual nature of ultimate reality or on the other hand the material nature of ultimate reality. Plato said that the ideas one entertains are more real to him than the material things he can touch and see. To the Hindus the Paramatman is the ultimate reality, and the material world is Maya. To the materialist

the created world is the only reality ; it is eternal. Dialectical materialism asserts that matter alone is real, and that economic considerations motivate every act of man. What then is the Hebrew experience of reality ? What is real ? Both material things and spiritual things are real. Material depends for its existence on the spiritual ; but both are real. The natural and the supernatural are intertwined, though the natural is subject to the supernatural. Elisha's house may be surrounded by the hosts of Syria, a material fact ; but if one had eyes to see, he would also discover there a mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha (2 Kings 6:11-19). Countless stories in the Books of Kings are recorded, not as simply illustrations of spiritual truth, but as actual historical fact, which indicate the line the Hebrews were following in their solution of the problem of the nature of reality.

Regarding also the nature of man, it has been the tendency of most philosophies and religions either to over-emphasize the spiritual side of his nature or to over-emphasize the physical side of his nature. To the Hindus the only abiding element in man is his Atman. The Atman is a part of the Paramatman, and the ultimate goal of life is absorption back into that spirit. On the other hand the materialist declares that man is only an animal, and happiness of the body is all that matters. What is the Hebrew solution to this problem ? Found in elementary fashion in the Pentateuch and illustrated by historical events in the Books of Kings is the teaching that man is an animal, but not only an animal. Man has God's image stamped on him ; he is spiritual. In man two worlds meet, the material and the spiritual : he has both material and spiritual needs. Food is provided by ravens for Elijah at the brook Cherith ; the oil of the widow of Zarephath does not fail (1 Kings 17:1-16). An angel provides food for Elijah in the wilderness ; but this same Elijah can hear the speaking of the ' still small voice ' (1 Kings 19:4-18). On and on the stories go. Man is a creature responsible to his Creator. His life and history are dependent on his own free choice and his recognition of responsibility to God. He determines his destiny by his attitude toward God ; the exile is the chief evidence of this.

Regarding also the nature of morality, Hebrew history gives a unique answer. To the materialist moral laws are the inventions of man, customs brought into being for the sake of social order, or for the sake of enforcing and maintaining the authority of government. To the Hindu, morality is defined in terms of caste duty, social customs with a religious sanction. To the Hebrews, moral laws were given by the Creator for the governance and welfare of those whom He had created. They were given to man from God, since God has the right to govern those whom He has created. They were given to the Hebrews especially because He had delivered them from Egyptian bondage and had made a covenant with them at Mount Sinai. Every judgement that fell on the people and their leaders is interpreted as the

result of unfaithfulness to that covenant. Ahab and Jezebel are punished for taking the life of Naboth. Religion cannot be divorced from social justice. Exile stands at the end of the road for those who will not obey the Law ; God judged the Hebrews in history.

ROAD TO ETHICAL MONOTHEISM

Hebrew history, then, is a kind of touchstone by which a clue is given for the solution of the problems of existence. But it is more than that. It is also unique in that it gives an interpreted revelation of the road by which God brought up a people out of a pagan cultural and religious background to the acceptance of ethical monotheism. Two steps on this road are found earlier than the Books of Kings. The first step was an act of redemption which all nations could see and recognize, the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Thus, even here, the Gospel preceded the Law. The second step was the establishment of a covenant. By this the people accepted a Law, a Standard, different from their previously accepted standard. Though at first this Law was only understood by a few, nevertheless there was great importance in a general and popular acceptance of the Law as their Law. Though practice fell far behind theory, it was important that the Mosaic Law be the basis of appeal for correction of abuses if the people were to move upward.

The third means in their history by which God led His people upward was that of such extremists as the Nazirites and the Rechabites. The Nazirites took three vows, each of which gave a lesson in visual education to the Hebrews. It was not possible for all to take these vows, but it was necessary for the good of the whole that a few should take them: (1) non-use of wine or strong drink, (2) abstention from use of the razor, and (3) abstention from contact with a dead body (Numbers 6:1-12). None of these acts was considered sinful in itself. But, because of certain associations with the fertility cults of the Baal-worshippers, the presence of a small minority of men who had taken these vows would always be a public indication of the fact that abstinence from such practices was a mark of special separation unto Jehovah. The Nazirite vow was voluntary, for a temporary period, only taken by the few, and was taken by both men and women.

The origin of the Rechabites is obscure. According to one hypothesis they seem to have been originally a Kenite clan (1 Chron. 2:55), and may have come from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. Numbers 11:29-32 shows that Moses invited the son of Jethro to go with him to Canaan, but leaves it doubtful as to what he did. Judges 1:16 shows that at the time of the occupation of Canaan the Kenites were present. From Jeremiah 35:1-11 it appears that Jonadab, the son of Rechab, in order to keep his descendants free from the fertility cults of the Baal-worshippers, had taught his sons to forswear vine-culture and

house-building as well as wine drinking. They are referred to in 2 Kings 10:15-17, when they give their support to Jehu in his eradication of Baal-worship from the Northern Kingdom. These were extremists, and their custom was good though not commanded of the Lord. Their presence was always a rebuke to any excesses in the drinking of wine, especially that associated with Baal-worship. The Nazirites and the Rechabites both had a place in God's way of leading His people upward out of paganism. The spiritual life of any society depends upon and may be greatly advanced by the presence of such minorities, extremists, ascetics who give up certain things which are not harmful in themselves. Such people become a rebuke to others, and serve as a goad to the conscience of society to make it move upward.

The fourth means in their history used by God for lifting up the Hebrew people was the prophets. The 'dynamic' element in Hebrew history was the inter-action between the high beliefs and concepts and practices of the prophets and the low practices of the masses of the people. These prophets were raised up by God in a true succession from Moses, for a practical interpretation and application of the Mosaic Law. Basing their appeals on the Mosaic Law which the masses had accepted theoretically as their Law, and combining social justice with religious idealism, the prophets sometimes condemned current practices with the support of the priests, sometimes with the support of the kings, sometimes with the support of both. But they were willing to stand alone if necessary, and often did stand alone speaking with authority based solely in their own integrity and their assurance that what they said was the Word of the Lord. It was the prophets who made the difference in Hebrew history; they are the chief ones responsible for the unique development of Hebrew history.

The fifth means in their history used by God for lifting the Hebrew people out of paganism was the revivals and reformations. Six of the kings of Judah effected widespread reformations; but they were praised reservedly because they did not remove the high places (1 Kings 15:11-15; 22:43; 2 Kings 12:1-3; 14:3, 4; 15:3, 4; 15:34). However, that those revivals served to keep alive the conscience of the people and to remind them that God expected more of them must be noted. Last of all, the two kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, effected even the removal of the high places (2 Kings 18:4; 23:1-25). There is no evidence that Isaiah showed any confidence in the revival under Hezekiah, or that Jeremiah showed any confidence in the revival under Josiah. Perhaps they saw that the revival was largely the result of the 'royal edict' of the king, and that no moral change had taken place in the heart of the people. The hopelessness of Josiah's day is seen in the words of Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings 22:14-20). But, just the same, when one takes the larger view of this whole period of Hebrew history, he cannot help but notice that these revivals did serve to condemn idolatrous practices and

to goad the conscience of the people. Though the people slipped back into idolatry after each revival, yet the revivals were used of God as one means of eventually bringing them to the acceptance of ethical monotheism.

After the reformation under Hezekiah, Manasseh the worst king of all led the people into greater wickedness than they had ever known before (2 Kings 21:1-18). After the reformation under Josiah, while Jeremiah stands with a red flag waving the nation back from its doom, the people plunge ahead into greater wickedness. Has all failed? The redemption from Egypt? The Law at Sinai? The work of the Nazirites and Rechabites? The work of the prophets? The revivals and reformations? Are all of these not sufficient to lift the people out of paganism? Is there any other means left by which God can purify and cleanse His people from idolatry? There is one other: The Exile. That is God's sixth means by which He will bring to completion the work He began more than seven long centuries before. Because the prophets interpreted the Exile as part of the discipline of God on the nation, this whole national experience put the final touches on all that had gone before. When they returned, they may have lapsed into idolatrous practices a few times, according to Ezra and Nehemiah; but the backbone of idolatry among the Hebrews had been broken. No matter what further hardships they experienced under the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans, they did not go back to the idols; the nation had become monotheistic. This is something unique in history. Romans 1:18-32 tells how other nations sank down into idolatry, and stayed there. The history of the Hebrews is unique in that it records how a people came up out of idolatry and paganism to the level of ethical monotheism; their history may serve as a clue for understanding how God will work similarly in dealing with other people.

PREPARED BACKGROUND FOR COMING OF CHRIST

There is a third thing that is unique about Hebrew history. Their history not only gives the facts for the solution of the problems of existence; their history not only indicates the path by which God leads a people out of paganism; their history is also unique in that it prepared a proper background in which Jesus Christ could be born. The appearance of Jesus was so meteoric, and the work He did extended for such a short duration in time that He cannot be understood apart from the historical events that preceded His appearance, and the epistles by which the inner significance of His life and work were interpreted after His appearance. Jesus Christ came in the 'fulness of time' as a part of an historical development started many centuries before.

In the first study it was noted that though the Hebrews assimilated many of the customs of their neighbours, there were four things for which they must always be commended: (1) the

observance of the Passover as their chief festival, (2) the refusal to make an image for Jehovah, (3) the non-attribution of children to Jehovah, and (4) the development of a tension between the prophets and the masses. These four elements in their history were of prime importance in preparing for the coming of Christ. While Jeroboam I changed the chief festival for the Northern Kingdom to the eighth month to make it coincide with the New Year Harvest Festival of the God of Nature worshipped by the Canaanites (1 Kings 12:25-33), yet in the Southern Kingdom the Passover was always observed as the chief festival, and was revived at each of the great reformations under Hezekiah and Josiah. The Passover was of prime importance because it pointed back to the chief historical fact in Hebrew history, the deliverance from Egypt, and forward to the historical event when God would deliver sinners from the bondage of sin through the death and resurrection of His Son. The Passover lamb recalled the blood which was sprinkled on the doorpost and by which the house was protected from the angel of death, and pointed forward to the blood of Christ which would be shed for the justification and reconciliation of the world. The Passover was the main link between the past and the future. It had no equivalent among the neighbours of the Hebrews ; it marked their God as a God of History ; it prepared for the coming of Christ in a unique way.

It is remarkable that the Hebrews never made an image for Jehovah. Numerous images of other gods and goddesses have been found on sites alongside the worship of Jehovah. In the period of the monarchy the people kept many figurines of mother-goddesses in their houses. But no image of Jehovah has ever been discovered, and there is no indication anywhere that an image for Jehovah was ever made. Isaiah pictures the people of Israel as being ashamed at a great Parliament of Religions because all other nations have beautiful images to represent their gods, but they have nothing (Isaiah 41:1-29). Nevertheless, they never made an image for Jehovah. This lack of an image of Jehovah required the coming of a Person Who would Himself be the Express Image of God (Hebrews 1:3).

It is also remarkable that the Hebrews never attributed children to Jehovah. The worship of Jehovah and the worship of the mother-goddesses were carried on side by side. All the Baals were thought of as males and the Astartes as females. The Canaanites had many stories of marriages among the gods. Yet, there is no evidence that any of the mother-goddesses were ever connected with Jehovah as wives. And no children were ever attributed to Him under any circumstances. Alexander the Great gave credence to the story that the god Zeus, in the form of a serpent, cohabited with his mother and caused him to be born. The Minoans, in the centuries before Moses, told the story that the god Zeus, in the form of a bull, captured a Phoenician princess, swam with her to the isle of Crete, there became the father of three sons by her, and thus established the ruling line

of Minos in the island. In the cultural and religious background of South-west Asia during the period of the monarchy the line between gods and men was a very fine one, gods could become men at will and then change themselves back again. In this background the Hebrews developed a high monotheism almost amounting to deism, and so emphasized the transcendence of God that in the time of Christ people feared to call God by the name of Jehovah and invented another name for Him, Adonai, by which they would refer to Him indirectly. In this background the story of the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ, to a virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit, once for all, would be difficult for a Jew to comprehend or accept. The very difficulty of admission would make the story more credible if accepted, and would tend to make its acceptance in the nature of an exception to be made only once. This kind of background would give greater value to the claim for a Virgin Birth than if the claim had been made in a background which was already accustomed to accepting all kinds of stories about miraculous, unusual, extraordinary births. In this way Hebrew history prepared especially for His coming.

The tension that developed between the prophets and the masses was also in itself a preparation for the coming of Christ. During the first period after the deliverance from Egypt, it was the priest who exercised chief power over the people. From the human point of view there was a struggle going on between the spiritual and civil leaders of the people. The fall of the House of Eli (1 Samuel 1-5) signified the end of priestly dominance, though the institution of priesthood continued even down to the time of Christ. When Solomon became king, he deposed the line of priesthood coming from Eli and established a new line (1 Kings 2:27, 35). At the time of the dedication of the temple, Solomon acted as both priest and king (1 Kings 8:62-66). This showed the ascendancy of the king over the priest, of the civil power over the spiritual power. But during the period of the Kings, while the priesthood was still in existence, and while the monarchy was rising to its glory and falling, beginning from Samuel onwards, it was the prophets to whom the future belonged. When Christ came, as Priest, King, and Prophet, He fulfilled the functions of all three, and of the three He continued only the last, the Prophet, in the ministry of His Church. With the coming of Christ, the priestly function was both fulfilled and ended. Each individual believer became a priest. There is no mention of an earthly priesthood in the New Testament. Nor is there mention of an earthly kingship. But, in the New Testament Church the prophetic ministry continues. In the three listings of spiritual gifts, found in Romans twelve, First Corinthians twelve, and Ephesians four, prophets in every case stand near the head of the list. The prophetic gift in the sense of interpreting the acts of God in history continues throughout the present age. The prophets were the chief ones who prepared

for the coming of Christ ; they exercised the greatest influence in preparing the background within which He would do His work ; the future belonged to them.

PRACTICAL VALUES

In closing it will be profitable to ask what we may learn from this study of the Books of Kings that will be of practical value to Christians today. One of the first things will come with humbling effect on us all : namely, that we are not to expect too much recognition from the rest of the world for the religious and cultural contribution made to the world by Christianity. In the inscriptions of Babylon and Assyria and Egypt there are occasional references to the Hebrews ; but there is nothing whatever in those inscriptions to indicate that any of Israel's conquerors appreciated in the smallest degree her unique religious history or her cultural contribution to the world. The incidental references that are found here and there relate only to various conquests of the land and collections of revenue from the land. To the other powers of South-west Asia, Samaria and Jerusalem were never more than troublesome fortresses which stood in the way of their spoliation of surrounding villages and towns. Our appreciation of the uniqueness of Hebrew history and of the uniqueness of the Hebrew interpretation of history are entirely out of proportion to the appreciation of the peoples among whom they lived. And we must not expect any greater appreciation for Christianity today than was accorded to the Hebrews in that previous day.

A second thing we may learn is that it is important for any people, if it is to march upward out of paganism, that there be a few extremists, like the Nazirites and Rechabites, who will live lives of utter separation unto God, and who by their presence will be a constant rebuke to the rest of the people and a public sign of God's holiness. A few such men might well be encouraged.

A third thing we may learn is the prime importance, yes, the indispensability of the prophetic ministry, interpreting the Law of God, the Word of God, and combining social justice with religious idealism. No amount of administrative efficiency, no amount of organizational discipline, no amount of financial resources can take the place of the prophetic ministry. These others are all right in their place. But, the prophets, without any financial backing and without any power to discipline wrong-doers, relying solely on the rightness of their cause, appealing straight to the innermost conscience of their people, achieved what no king by royal edict could ever achieve. The greatest need in the churches of India today is for the prophetic ministry.

A fourth thing we may learn is that revivals are important. We cannot always live on a revival level. But revivals, times of cleansing and restitution, times of repentance and reformation,

have their place. Throughout the long period of four hundred years covered by the Books of Kings only eight revivals are recorded, all were in the Southern Kingdom, and six were limited by the fact that the high places were allowed to remain. In the hundred and fifty years of modern Christian activity in India, how many revivals have there been? How many revivals have there been that reached throughout one whole language area? Perhaps the greatest revival of all these years might come within this generation if the prophetic ministry arose in mighty cleansing power.

A fifth thing we may learn is that we are to interpret hardships, difficulties, obstacles, even an Exile, as part of the plan of God for the purification of His people. We have the same human ground for discouragement today as the little handful of Hebrews had in the midst of great Babylon in the sixth century before Christ. But, there can be, by the grace of God, and by a prophetic vision, a transformation of these obstacles; they can become a means of discipline and a preparation for some greater blessing to come. No doubt to many Jewish leaders at the fall of Jerusalem it seemed that the world had come to an end; they saw no hope for the future. Likewise, at the fall of the Roman Empire, even to Augustine, there seemed no hope for the future, and no hope for Christianity. It was in that circumstance that he saw his vision of the City of God. The Exile shows that out of the fall of a civilization God preserves the best elements and works for the achievement of His purposes. We are not to put our faith in any system, not even capitalism or democracy; but in the God who rules over all systems, judges them, and saves the best out of them. We are never to doubt that it is God's purpose for all the doors of the world, including China, to be open to the full and free proclamation of His Gospel. If they are closed anywhere, it is due to human sin and blindness, and the closing of the doors is a judgment of God. But we are to be sure that He is even now working to bring good out of this situation.

A sixth thing we may learn is encouraging, inspiring, optimistic, just as the first thing was humbling, depressing, somewhat pessimistic. The progress made by Indian Christians during the past one hundred and fifty years of Christian activity in India is more remarkable than the progress made by the Hebrews during all the eight hundred years of their history between the bondage in Egypt and the exile into Babylon. That Indian Christians live in a background very much parallel to that in which the Hebrews of the monarchy lived has been seen earlier. That their progress has been more remarkable than that of the Hebrews cannot be denied, and it is a tremendous tribute to the extra power released through the Life and Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to all the glorious truths revealed in the New Testament that were not known even to the best of Old Testament saints and prophets. The power of the Gospel has been demonstrated in the history of India. The future belongs to Christ and to His Gospel.

Review Article

IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

S. ESTBORN

Can we take the Biblical message seriously? Can we accept the Biblical teaching that man is a fallen being, rebellious against God, and that Christ is God's way of reconciling man to Himself? To address these questions to a Christian seems to be to answer them. For, it seems, the Christian answer can be but one.

This is the standpoint taken by Dr. H. Kraemer in his two major works *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, written for the International Missionary Council's Conference at Tambaram in 1938, and *Religion and the Christian Faith*, published in 1956. In both he is wrestling with the question: What consequence does this standpoint have for our attitude to non-Christian religions?

The background of the Tambaram book was Hocking's *Rethinking Missions, a Layman's Inquiry after a hundred years*, published in America in the early 1930's. This book worked as a bombshell in the missionary world, because it placed Christianity and non-Christian religions more or less on the same level, and made Christian mission merely a mission of culture and goodwill. With this book, and the situation created by it, in mind Dr. Kraemer wrote his book *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. It acted, in his own judgement, 'as another bombshell' (*Religion and the Christian Faith*, p. 224). Seldom has a book roused such heated discussion as did this book, before, during and after the great conference. The present reviewer remembers a missionary gathering in Madras shortly before the conference, when the then General Secretary of the International Missionary Council, William Paton, was here to give the last touch to the preparations of the conference. Dr. Paton said: 'If your group is not divided on Kraemer, it is unique in the whole universe.'

To a certain extent the new book is a scrutiny of and a reply to the critics of the first book, and a re-examination of the standpoint taken then. Dr. Kraemer explains that his 'standing-place' was 'misunderstood by many and misinterpreted as narrowness of mind, dogmatism, even fundamentalism' (*Religion and the Christian Faith*, p. 222).

His 'standing-place', certainly, is a watershed dividing two river systems of religious thinking. The question is this:

comparing the Christian faith and non-Christian religions, shall we take our stand, so to say, outside and above them all, including the Christian faith, and from that neutral point of view attempt an objective evaluation of them all, including the Christian faith ; or, shall we, as Christians, take our stand within the Christian faith, and from there examine and evaluate the non-Christian religions (and religious philosophies) ? The latter alternative seems to represent dogmatism and narrowness, the former, on the other hand, seems commendable, not only for its generosity and broadmindedness, but, above all, for its objectivity ; from a scientific point of view it alone seems possible.

Yet, is it possible ? A comparison and evaluation requires a criterion and standard measure according to which the compared objects are to be measured and valued. Is there such a criterion and standard measure available in the world of religion ? Is it perhaps to be found in the 'natural religion' of the Deists, or in Schleiermacher's 'feeling of absolute dependence', in Soederblom's and Otto's 'idea of the Holy', in Hoeffding's 'belief in the indestructibility of value' or in Nygren's 'category of eternity' — just to mention a few modern proposals ? They are all different from one another ; some of them are obviously of purely formal character, and can therefore not be, and are not intended to be, standard measures of empirical religions. The quintessence of religion which the Deists called 'natural religion' was definitely so intended, but modern science of religion is unanimous that it was a mere abstraction and therefore fallacious as a standard measure, and Dr. Kraemer is certainly right in pointing out that there is no such thing as a universal 'essence of all religions'. There is only a universal religious consciousness manifesting itself in a great variety of different religions. A scientific evaluation of religions by this method is therefore not possible.

On the other hand, it should be possible to evaluate a religion from the point of view of another religion, using the latter one as a criterion and standard measure of religious values. But can such an evaluation be objective and scientific ? Yes, it should be possible to state objectively how customs, beliefs and doctrines of one religion must be valued from the point of view of another. Provided such a comparison and evaluation is made on the basis of methodical and critical research of the same calibre and kind as every scholar uses, it certainly can have the right of claiming to be scientific. What is needed, in addition to scholarly training and method and a thorough knowledge of the subject, is a sense for religious realities, a psychological ability to understand another's mind, and a sincere intention to be fair and objective. That one always must make allowance for a certain amount of subjectivity is a fate which the science of religion shares with all other sciences, even natural science.

Which religion a person believes in and consequently will use as a standard measure is a different issue. This is not a matter of science, nor of the intellect alone, but a matter of decision and

choice in which intellect, feeling, will, intuition, the whole personality are involved.

Now the question comes: can a convinced and sincere Christian choose any other criterion and standard than Christ? Dr. Kraemer complains that his critics wanted him to take a neutral, 'objective', view—'as if a Christian has the possibility and the right to have a "standing-place" whence he may judge Jesus Christ!' (op. cit., p. 145).

Does this mean, then, that a Christian may say: 'Christ is my standard, the Hindu and the Muslim may have their standards, the one may be as good and true as the other'? Of course not. Truth is but one. If I am convinced that Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life, I cannot accept anything as true which does not agree with Christ. This, however, does not imply that a Christian must condemn or reject everything non-Christian as untrue, but it does imply that he will and must examine, judge and evaluate every religious experience, practice and teaching *in the light of Christ*.

In regard to the evaluation of the pluri-form religious life of mankind in the light of the Christian Revelation, the crucial question, says Dr. Kraemer, is this: 'Are the various religions (philosophies, life-conceptions) of mankind places of encounter between man and God, or are they not? Or to put it differently: Are they responses to a divine activity, or are they not?' (op. cit., p. 6).

When Dr. Kraemer wrote his *Tambaram* book he took the standpoint that, though God may have been wrestling with man at every time and everywhere in order to turn him and establish contact with him, it is almost impossible to indicate systematically and concretely where God revealed Himself and wrestled and wrestles with man in non-Christian religions. His main concern then was to show that non-Christian religions chiefly must be regarded as man's achievement to assert himself in his attempt 'to be like God'. He was therefore inclined to deny the existence of any 'point of contact' between the non-Christian religions and the Christian faith, and he insisted that there could be no talk of Christ as the 'fulfilment' of non-Christian religions as Dr. Farquhar had advocated in his famous book *The Crown of Hinduism*. Dr. Kraemer stressed that the Christian faith necessarily implied the 'discontinuity' of the non-Christian religions. This view he maintained and explained further in his contribution to the book *The Authority of the Faith* in the 'Tambaram Series', published after the conference.

It was especially on this point that he was severely criticized. He now admits that he 'too one-sidedly characterized the religions as human performances and achievements, good or bad, and dealt with them too unilaterally as purely human products' (op. cit., p. 316). By focusing his attention on the religious consciousness as the place of God's wrestling with man, he now gives, in his new book, more room to express definite opinions (though

admittedly always open to revision) on the results of this divine-human encounter in non-Christian religions. He maintains, however, that this encounter always has a 'dialectic' character, in a double sense: on the one hand God's dealing with man is always one of judgement and grace, and on the other hand man's response is always either negative, or only partly positive and partly negative, or distortedly positive. This gives to the non-Christian religions an 'ambivalent' character of 'yes and no', of good and bad; there cannot, therefore, be the slightest deviation from the chief principle that all non-Christian religious experience, teaching and practice must be examined and evaluated in the light of the Christian Revelation.

It should be noted, however, that he does not say 'in the light of Christianity'. Dr. Kraemer lays emphasis on the distinction between empirical Christianity (with its doctrines, organizations and practices) and the Christian Revelation, i.e. God's self-disclosure in Christ. Empirical Christianity, as well as the non-Christian religions, is subject to examination and evaluation in the light of Christ.

This divine self-disclosure in the historical Christ, the man Jesus of Nazareth, as recorded and interpreted in the New Testament, and prepared for in a series of divine acts recorded in the Old Testament, is *the* Revelation of God. There is only *one* revelation, not one 'general' and one 'special'. Dr. Kraemer dislikes the idea of a general revelation, because it leads to the idea of a 'natural theology' apart from the theology of the Christian Revelation. He suggests a new terminology and speaks of other 'modes' of revelation: God's eternal power, divinity and wrath are disclosed in nature, in historical human life and activity, and in human consciousness (Rom. 1 and 2). But whenever and wherever God is actively disclosing Himself out of direct personal concern for man for the creative re-establishment of the relation of God with man, this revelation is 'special' and in essential agreement with His self-disclosure in Christ. Hence the necessity of testing the claims of all such experiences in the light of Christ.

From this radically Biblical 'standing-place' Dr. Kraemer examines a number of interpretations of revelation, Christian and non-Christian.

With non-Christian interpretations he deals by means of an analysis of Dr. Radhakrishnan as a representative of Hindu thinking. He has no quarrel with Dr. Radhakrishnan on the score that he wants to interpret Hinduism to the West. It is certainly his right to believe in Hinduism and to advocate it. But Dr. Kraemer has other axes to grind with him. First, he is not a true and reliable interpreter of Hinduism. He has appropriated a number of Christian ideas and ideals which he pretends to belong to the Hindu heritage, and he uses so much language derived from genuinely Christian spiritual climate and vocabulary, that 'it is not severe to say: words, words! They

cannot, logically speaking, have any real content, because within the context and spirit of the Indian *philosophia perennis* they are entirely incongruous' (op. cit., 128f.) 'The *arthasāstras* of India are far more trustworthy sources for understanding and appreciating Hindu views on economic, social, political and cultural life than Radhakrishnan's "Hindu View of Life", which is a distorted picture of the reality of the past and the present' (op. cit., p. 131).

Further, Radhakrishnan's treatment of Christianity is far from objective. His dislike for Christianity is obvious. 'Of course, it is his right to dislike Christianity if he chooses to do so. One might even add that a Christian from the West should accept his dislike and misunderstanding humbly as an act of just retribution for the many Western treatments of Hinduism which have manifested deep misunderstanding and biased dislike. Yet, the right remains to expect from a man of Radhakrishnan's standing and ability a style of conduct which conforms more closely to his pretension of Indian tolerance and rare gift of comprehensive charity. Radhakrishnan's claim for all-inclusiveness breaks down on Christianity' (op. cit., p. 129f.).

Yet, Dr. Kraemer's chief criticism of Radhakrishnan is that he advocates Hindu mysticism as the truest and highest form of religion, in the name of the science of religion. It is Radhakrishnan's right to think that Hindu mysticism is the religion *par excellence*, but he should know that 'this is after all, just as the central emphasis of Christianity on revelation and faith, a primary decision, an *a priori*, and not a proven case' (op. cit., p. 133).

Dr. Kraemer, however, has also a bill to settle with philosophy (philosophy of religion, religious philosophy, philosophical life-conceptions). He does so, at the end of the book, in the form of an analysis of Paul Tillich's attempt at a reconciliation of (ontological) philosophy and the Christian faith. Tillich's main argument that these two have two essential things in common, viz. passion for truth, and doubt, is totally rejected on the ground that these similarities are merely formal and external. Passion has not the same quality, status and function in philosophy as in faith. In (ontological) philosophy it is always one of the mainsprings of the quest. But faith has nothing to do with such passion, because it is essentially not a quest, but trust in God ; it is *Ergriffensein*, being gripped by God. The same is the case with doubt. It is a quite different thing in philosophy than in faith. In philosophy it is a method, and must be methodically exercised ; in faith it is a temptation (*Anfechtung*). Tillich's reconciliation therefore breaks down. Faith and philosophy are two incompatibles.

But in addition to, and between these two main targets of attack Dr. Kraemer turns his scrutinizing torch-light also on the whole range of Christian interpreters of the Faith, from the early Apologists and Church-fathers, over the Medieval Schoolmen, and the Reformers to modern theologians and religionists, particularly

Soederblom, 'the Clement of the twentieth century'. He comes to the conclusion that their interpretations are all very valuable, but that they, with the exception of Luther, Calvin and Hamann, are all more or less defective in one point: their orientation is not radically Biblical.

Naturally any reader will put a number of question marks with regard to details. For one thing, Dr. Kraemer seems not to have done full justice to the victims of his severe criticism, particularly not to Tillich and Soederblom. Many, probably, will put a question mark also after his main thesis; but it seems not to be easily overthrown, either from a Christian or from a scientific point of view. We had better take his concern for a radically Biblical orientation of our thinking to heart. Of course, we all confess Christ as our Master, as the Way, the Truth and the Life, but are we prepared to take the full consequence of this standpoint with regard to our thinking and teaching? The problem is certainly not unique to our generation, but Dr. Kraemer has renewed a question which the next generation will have to wrestle with seriously.



Not Rapture but Love

Not for me is the love that knows no restraint, but like the foaming wine that, having burst its vessel in a moment, would run to waste.

Send me the love which is cool and pure, like your rain that blesses the thirsty earth and fills the homely jars.

Send me the love that would soak down into the centre of being, and from there would spread like the unseen sap through the branching tree of life, giving birth to fruits and flowers.

Send me the love that keeps the heart still with the fulness of peace.

Rabindranath Tagore

Book Reviews

China and the Cross : by Columba Cary-Elwes. Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., London, xii + 323. 25s.
(Available from Orient Longmans, Post Box 2146, Calcutta.)

The dust jacket of this book carries the Chinese characters for the word 'truth'—a very appropriate sub-title, for the book is a balanced, fair and vivid outline of the history of the four missionary attempts to win China for Christ. The author has succeeded in avoiding both the error of compressing the material to such an extent that it lacks interest and also the error of making generalizations which need constant correction. A friend of the reviewer remarked after reading the book, 'I never knew the church in China had so long and interesting a history.'

Although written by a Roman Catholic, the book gives an adequate outline of the history of Protestant missions in China, and the author expresses his deep indebtedness to the writings of Prof. K. S. Latourette. Protestant denominations, however, puzzle him. He refers to the work of the London Missionary Society and the China Inland Mission with admiration, but goes on to speak of 'a locust swarm of out-of-the-way and in some cases erratic bodies' which flooded China in the early twentieth century. On the other hand, he does not gloss over the existence of conflicting groups in the Roman Catholic church which seriously hampered its work in China, as for example, in the Rites controversy.

The author attempts a diagnosis of the reasons for the failure of the Nestorian, Franciscan and Jesuit attempts to win China, and expresses the opinion that it was largely because of the lack of an adequate Chinese ministry. The figures he gives of foreign and Chinese priests are very illuminating, and deserve careful consideration by all missionaries.

The story of the Communist Revolution which brought to an end the fourth missionary attempt to win China is wisely told in an 'Epilogue', for, as the author says, 'We cannot truly guess the workings of Providence. We cannot foretell the future or gauge the significance of present events in the light of the not yet unfolded years ahead.' Yet he is not pessimistic; the book is written in the faith that 'one day the mind of Christ and the mind of China will be made one'.

The book is recommended to all who need a concise yet vivid history of the church in China. It is also recommended to all who are concerned with missionary work in any country, as it

illuminates the fundamental problems that beset every attempt to plant the church in a foreign land.

Calcutta

E. G. T. MADGE

How Shall They Hear? : by G. W. Ireson. S.P.C.K., viii + 222.
Rs.6/37.

(Available from S.P.C.K., Post Box 1585, Delhi 6.)

Of books on preaching there seems to be no end. It is good for both those who have been in the ministry for many years and those who are beginning their ministry to read such books because they remind them of their responsibilities as ministers of the Word. Only a few such books will mean very much to the reader, and will remain on his bookshelves ; for the present reviewer two alone stand out as masterpieces to which he can turn again and again, namely H. H. Farmer's *The Servant of the Word* and Bishop Phillips Brooks' *Lectures on Preaching*—it is good to hear that S.P.C.K. is shortly to publish a new edition of this latter book. Canon Ireson's book will join Farmer's and Phillips Brooks' as books on preaching to which one can always turn.

This is a useful book, for several reasons : first, because it is very simply written, secondly, because Canon Ireson lays down clearly and decisively the principles of preaching and then proceeds to demonstrate the principles from his own sermons (of which no less than twelve are included in the Second Part of the book), thirdly, because Canon Ireson has a happy gift of illustrating his points in a way that enables the reader to retain them in mind.

We may wish that more attention had been paid to Biblical sermons—the Western approach to the Bible as suggested by Canon Ireson is not entirely satisfactory in India, where generally the Bible is given considerably more authority than in the West ; and we may wish that his sermons had been less Western in their atmosphere, but as they were preached for Western ears this is inevitable and only underlines Canon Ireson's insistence that the preacher should start from where his people are.

This is a book which all, especially Anglicans, who are concerned with the ministry of the Word, should read, a book that not only for its common sense but also for its insight into this very important part of the ministry should be read, marked, learned and inwardly digested. Those who do so will certainly find an improvement in their preaching, and laymen who are dissatisfied with the preaching of their parish priest or minister could hardly do better than give him a copy.

Calcutta

PETER MAY

Plato and the Christians : by Adam Fox. (S.C.M. Press. 21s. or Rs.15/75.)

(Available from Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 5 Russell Street, Calcutta 16.)

The Archdeacon of Westminster has had the excellent idea of collecting together all the passages in Plato's writings that resemble in any way the Christian Scriptures and appending suitable Scripture references, and sometimes interesting comments of his own. The result is a most attractive Platonic anthology. One is constantly impressed by the many-sidedness of Plato's genius ; here is no dry intellectualist, but an enthusiast and a practical reformer, full of good ideas ranging from the right way to bury great citizens (see p. 178) to the right attitude towards those who boast of their lofty lineage (p. 114). But in truth the parallels with Christianity do not as a rule seem very striking, it is more often the contrast with Christianity that strikes one. For example, Diotima's exposition of love in the Symposium (quoted on page 63) is really extraordinarily unlike Isaiah's vision, of which we are reminded by Archdeacon Fox when he quotes this passage. The book might well be used as a quintessence of Plato by those who have not got any other of Plato's works, or who know nothing else about him.

Bangalore

ANTHONY HANSON

Facing a Renaissance : by Bishop S. Kulandran, Jaffna. (Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 5 Russell Street, Calcutta 16. Re.1/00.)

In this small book consisting of 106 pages packed with information carefully collected and sifted, and shrewd observations made after years of deep thinking, profound learning and wide experience, Bishop Kulandran deals with the renaissance of non-Christian religions of South East Asia. In the Preface he warns us that he has made no attempt to deal with All the non-Christian religions throughout the world. He has confined his enquiries to Hinduism, Theravadin Buddhism and Islam—even so not an easy task.

The book consists of three chapters only. Chapters I and III constitute the two sections of a paper written in April, 1955, to be read at a conference held in Davos, Switzerland, under the auspices of the Study Department of the World Council of Churches. The second chapter was written later on in December, 1956, to bring the facts as up to date as possible. This explains the consequent difference in perspective between these two sections.

In the first chapter the author deals with the renaissance of non-Christian religions beginning with the early nineteenth century. Vivekananda, according to the author, is 'the first, and indeed the greatest figure in the revival of Hinduism in modern times'. Though this is true in one sense, it cannot be forgotten

that pioneers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen and Ramakrishna had blazed the trail before him and prepared the ground for his message.

The author goes on to deal with the contributions of Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghose, Ramana Maharshi and Radhakrishnan with great insight and skill. 'The common type that has tended to emerge recently . . . has Vedantic Monism as its intellectual background. Its sacred book and standard of faith is the *Bhagavad Gita*', says the author, who thinks that there has been a supersession of the South by the North. But one has to remember that both Samkara, the greatest early exponent of Advaita, and Radhakrishnan, the greatest modern interpreter of the system, hail from the South and that even in the history of Vaishnavism the names of Ramanuja, Madhva, and Ramananda occupy the front rank.

Bishop Kulandran next deals with the revival in Buddhism and here he is in his own element. Chapter I ends with a brief yet penetrating survey of the revival in Islam.

In the second chapter the author brings the movements up to date and in the last and third chapter he outlines the Christian approach to non-Christian religions. The last chapter is illuminating reading. One wishes it were longer and the discussion of the problem fuller. It was specially unfortunate that Dr. Kraemer's book *Religion and Christian Faith* appeared only just as this book was going to the press and could not be discussed at any length, although the author has dealt with the main issue raised by Dr. Kraemer. We hope that Bishop Kulandran will soon fulfil this wish.

Regarding the Fulfilment Theory of the Gospel, the author says: 'It (the Christian Gospel) fulfils not solutions but quests. Solutions are particular, quests are universal.' To ensure that it is the Christian Gospel that is preached and at the same time to see that it is preached as a fulfilment, he continues, it must begin with an agreement (otherwise there is no common ground to begin); proceed to a disagreement (otherwise you have nothing new or different to say); and finally arrive at another agreement, where the listener has been brought to a new place, which, however, he feels does justice to his basic quest. Finally Bishop Kulandran discusses the practical side of the Task of Presentation, in which he has some urgent things to say.

This small book is very neatly got up and the price of one rupee barely covers the cost of production. In the space of a few pages the author gives us a clear and succinct picture of the movements, the direction they are taking and the task before the Christian Church in South East Asia—specially in India, Ceylon, Burma and Pakistan. Written in simple, clear and vivid language and reflecting the profound knowledge and wide experience of a leader of Bishop Kulandran's calibre, not to read this book is an inexcusable loss.

Correspondence

United Theological College,
17 Miller's Road,
Bangalore 1,
S. India.

16-11-1957.

DEAR SIR,

In the review of Bishop Elliott's commentary on Hebrews, which appeared in your last number, there is a statement so unfounded that, in fairness both to those generally responsible for the series and to the Bishop, a correction is called for. The words are: 'But what of the class of Bible student for whom this series is primarily intended: the village evangelist, the Biblewoman, the intelligent Indian layman of an urban or rural congregation, the village schoolmaster who perhaps aspires to be a lay preacher?' In fact from the beginning it has been the aim of this series to provide basic texts for students, with the hope that they may be translated into Indian languages. The general level aimed at is that of the Serampore L.Th. The sales of the volumes in English and the number already translated not only into Indian languages but also into Chinese and the request that we will plan future volumes with an eye to the needs of all South-East Asia show that a real need is being met. But it is in relation to that need that we would ask that the series be judged.

Yours obediently,
MICHAEL HOLLIS,
Bishop,
Acting General Editor,
Christian Students' Library.

The Editor,
*Indian Journal
of Theology.*

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